



Greater Toronto Area, March 13, 2020

PRECAUTIONARY PROCEDURES FOR CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Dear Members of the Churches of the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese of Toronto,

We believe that the Eucharist, the Body and the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is life-giving. We partake of Him trusting that He is the main source of protection and life. For this reason, we will continue our practice of the Holy Eucharist without change in our centuries old rituals. We will also continue with our churches' celebration of the liturgical services, including Vespers, Praises and Divine Liturgies, trusting God and His promises.

In a spirit of pastoral fatherly love we, the priests of the Toronto Archdiocese, urge the parishes' congregations of the area to adhere to following recommendations with prudence, patience, and the avoidance of panic. The spirit of the Coptic Orthodox Church of the ages has never been a spirit of fear, but a spirit of peace and courage in the face of death, disease and persecution; let us prove ourselves worthy inheritors of this Faith.

And let us remember with compassion and love, all who are vulnerable (elderly, sick, and immune suppressed), and those who have pre-existing anxiety in this time, and reach to each other and pray for each other, and for those working self-sacrificially in every health sector—medical, nursing, and research—in order that this new pandemic be contained and treated. May the Lord have mercy upon us all.

However, we want to be diligent in our practices out of concern for the well-being of the most vulnerable people among us inside and outside the church. Therefore, we have decided to undertake the following for a limited time, until further notice:

1. Cancel all activities and meetings at church, including Sunday school, youth meetings, Bible Study Meetings,...etc., but excluding liturgical services as explained above.
2. Practice social distancing during services.
3. Cancel all Agape services after liturgies. We encourage you to go home immediately after the liturgy to avoid any unnecessary contact.